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# **News Release**

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## **South St. Paul charged with bank fraud, identity theft**

A 37-year-old South St. Paul man was indicted Dec. 4 by a federal grand jury in connection with an identity theft scheme. Christopher Dwight Bierbrauer was charged with nine counts of bank fraud, five counts of aggravated identity theft and one count of possession of stolen mail.

The indictment alleges that from Nov. 1, 2005, through Feb. 8, 2006, Bierbrauer executed the scheme by submitting to financial institutions fraudulent securities in the names and means of identification of third-party victims without their knowledge or consent.

It was the object of the scheme, the indictment alleges, to cash counterfeit checks at financial institutions in order to defraud the institution and to obtain money. The indictment stated that Bierbrauer allegedly made withdrawals by making "split deposits," which is when some of the funds are deposited and some are given in cash to the depositor, using counterfeit identification.

The indictment alleges that Bierbrauer defrauded Bremer Bank of \$29,603 between Jan. 31, 2006, Feb. 3, 2006. It also alleges that he defrauded US Bank of \$39,006 between Nov. 30, 2005, and Dec. 1, 2005, and that he defrauded the Twin City Co-op Federal Credit Union of \$1,200 on Dec. 29, 2005.

From Nov. 30, 2005, to Feb. 3, 2006, the indictment alleges that Bierbrauer did knowingly transfer, possess and use without lawful authority, a means of identification of other people. The indictment also alleges that on Dec. 29, 2005, Bierbrauer unlawfully possessed a check stolen from a mailbox.

If convicted on all counts, Bierbrauer faces a potential maximum penalty of 300 years in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael A. Dees.

proven guilty at trial.